

SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE

This news release may be sent to news organizations in your area, including local newspapers, TV and radio stations and publications from clubs, schools, or religious organizations. Include your name and a telephone number where you can be reached. Send the release out a few weeks in advance, and put May 1, 2008 after the words "For release: . . ." if you don't want it published until May.

For release: *(fill in desired date or type "for immediate release")*

For more information: *(Your name and telephone number)*

Last year in Virginia, **13,515** incidents of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of elderly persons and adults with disabilities were reported to Adult Protective Services (APS). APS is the system that was established by the *Code of Virginia* and operated by the local departments of social services to investigate allegations of adult abuse and provide services to stop or alleviate the mistreatment. APS can arrange assistance for the victim through various programs such as adult day care, counseling, home support and residential services.

Types of adult mistreatment may include physical abuse, sexual assault, neglect of essential health or personal needs, or the exploitation of an adult's financial resources or property. APS substantiated **65** percent of cases of abuse, neglect or exploitation in fiscal year 2007.

Though the abuse of vulnerable adults is not a new phenomenon, it has long been cloaked in silence and has not had the public visibility that abuse of children has had. Some research indicates that abuse of vulnerable adults is as prevalent as the abuse of children; however, adult abuse is vastly underreported.

Adults who are vulnerable to mistreatment are frequently isolated and less likely to have their plight discovered by an interested outsider. Many who are victimized go unreported and unaided.

Fifty-four percent of substantiated reports concerned incidents of adult self-neglect. **Sixty** percent of APS reports alleged abuse, neglect or exploitation that occurred in the adult's own home or apartment.

May is Older Americans' Month. The Virginia Department of Social Services, in collaboration with other state agencies and community partners, seeks to bring the issue of adult abuse to the attention of all Virginians. Victims of adult abuse are from all income levels, races, and ethnic backgrounds.

For information about adult abuse and what individuals can do to help, please contact *(organization or LDSS's name address & telephone number)*.

*Report suspected adult abuse, neglect, or exploitation to the local department of social services or to 24-hour, toll-free hotline at **1-888-83-ADULT (1-888-832-3858)**.*